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THEOSOPHY

A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF HUMANITY

THE STUDY OF OCCULT SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY, AND ARYAN LITERATURE

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H. P. Blavatsky

August 11, 1831 — May 8, 1891

IF we would look at the bodily H.P.B. as a mirror which reflected from above and from below as well, giving back to each who confronted it his own reflection according to his nature and power to perceive, we might get a better understanding of her nature. Few caught a glimpse of the real individuality. Those who looked at the body and its human characteristics got what that view was capable of giving them; those who looked at the mind behind got what came from it, in the degree of their comprehension; those who were able to look into the causes of things saw what their depths of sight gave them—more or less of Truth. —R.C.

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A U M

Thou art THYSELF the object of thy search: the VOICE unbroken, that resounds throughout eternities, the Voice of the Silence. —H.P.B.

THEOSOPHY

Vol. XXXVI May, 1948 No. 7

"THE VOICE UNBROKEN"

THE coming of a visible Teacher, to infuse new life into the world of thought, has been recorded in all ages. Men of power and compassion have appeared at intervals throughout history to teach, demonstrate, and illuminate "the great epic of the human soul." But history also records that the withdrawal of these extraordinary characters left their co-workers and disciples, for the most part, half-taught and unready.

The theosophical movement, inaugurated in 1875, was the declaration of certain principles and ideals which open out a whole new horizon to one who contemplates the "life" of a Teacher. The law of cycles, as applied to the theosophical movement itself, was shown to require the continuing rebirths of Theosophy, and, by comparison of ancient and modern doctrines, an inseparable connection was established between the various periodic manifestations of the Movement. One cycle in particular, a centenary effort beginning in the fourteenth century, was outlined for the first time. It was taught that the last quarter of each century since the time of Tzong-kha-pa, has witnessed an attempt by representatives of the Movement "to help on the spiritual progress of Humanity in a marked and definite way." This teaching, involving a prophecy for the future, and inviting corroboration from the past, exchanges the personal view of the coming and the going of a visible Teacher, for a wider perspective—the uninterrupted existence of a number of teachers and friends of mankind.

To recognize the centenary cycle as a basis for the "work of the companions," is to appreciate the immortality of the great souls who participate constantly—though in different modes at different phases of the cycle—in work with and for humanity. Time, place, form and circumstances may alter the outward aspect of this work, without changing its essential character and influence, and the student-theosophist who perceives unity in diversity can work with the same aim, will, and success whether the Teacher is visible or not.

In one sense, it may be said that the chief purpose of the life and work of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, the messenger of Theosophy in the nineteenth century, was to encourage theosophists to identify themselves with the theosophical *movement,* as distinguished from any personality connected with its periodic expression. With this end in view, Mme. Blavatsky consistently avoided the setting up of a new religion, or of a simple systematic philosophy. Her method of presentation is as baffling to the untrained mystic as to the over-trained scholastic. Personal revelation, she declares, is not a process of learning, but only a psychic subterfuge. The mechanical device of "pure logic" is equally unreliable, unless the fundamental assumptions are truths self-evident to one's *understanding.* The theosophical literature is chiefly welcome to those who have the courage of their intuitions.

H. P. Blavatsky set forth the basic concepts of theosophic philosophy in myriad ways, drawing upon now one and now another tradition, science, scripture, or philosophy for illustration, weaving the evidence from thousands of independent investigators into a coherent garment—the "veil of Isis," to use the original title of the first book written for the present theosophical movement. Isis, the Egyptian goddess of nature, is a symbol of mystery, even as Nature herself remains hidden within all her creations. The "woman clothed with the sun" is the Truth, ever secret to eyes blinded by its form.

There is not alone *one* veil for Isis, but as many veils as there are minds turned outside in search of her. There is not alone *one* form of truth: there are as many disguises as men can fashion to keep the truth from themselves. The eternal reply of Isis, "Truth," or the Sphinx, to the question, *What* is Truth? may be substantially

the same as the answer H. P. Blavatsky once gave to a friend who inquired about her theosophical existence. H.P.B. wrote: "I have no secrets from you, except those that you seem to be unable to understand though I do not conceal them from you."

Until her passing, on May 8, 1891, Mme. Blavatsky worked to incarnate in the mind of the century the fundamental principles of "universal Unity and Causation; Human Solidarity; the Law of Karma; Re-incarnation." Not only did she aim at the embodiment of these ideas, but in accordance with the last-named law, she was constantly engaged in their *re*-incarnation. She "destroyed" old forms of thought by directing attention to the same thought in other words. She melted down a hard-and-fast conclusion by the fire of the very idea that was supposed to be fixed inside the verbal shell. In consequence, the first impression of her major work, *The Secret Doctrine,* may be of paradox hung upon paradox, followed by yet other unsettling subtleties. The careful student finds his way by starting out again and again from the basic doctrines given, striving to keep within his mental grasp the "common vital principle" behind various modes of expression.

As one perfects his concentration upon meaning rather than words, upon philosophy instead of intellectual formulation, ideas no more appear in forced isolation as things in themselves. A concept comes to be considered as *the thinking of a mind* which is contacted, knowingly or unknowingly, by other minds engaged on the same thought. Where would the power of an idea come from, if not from the being who mentally projects it?

To give room in the consciousness to a high spiritual idea, to envision a metaphysics as lofty as one's thought can contain or reach, may be to entertain unaware a high spiritual being—or to begin the realization of the god within. *The Secret Doctrine,* in suggesting certain functions of the *Manasa,* "sons" of Universal Mind, names them as the "givers of intelligence and consciousness to man." These Solar Gods are referred to as man's "indwelling Principle," the link between Spirit and Matter. One observation (*S.D.,* I, 633) shows the scope of this theory:

> To the eye of the Seer, the higher Planetary Powers appear under two aspects: the subjective—as *influences,* and the objective—as mystic FORMS, which, under Karmic law, become a

> *Presence,* Spirit and Matter being One, as repeatedly stated. Spirit is matter *on the seventh plane;* matter is Spirit—on the lowest point of its cyclic activity; and both—are MAYA.

Considering the implications of this metaphysical proposition, the theosophist may conclude that H.P.B., the visible Teacher in the nineteenth century, did more than live for nearly sixty years and then disappear, leaving a literature of Theosophy behind. If the laws of mind are as outlined in her teachings, she did not "leave" them nor the present Theosophical Movement at all. An idea exists in as many forms as thinking egos will provide for it. So also a Teacher lives for as many students as will bring the teaching to life in their minds and with gratitude remember the Teacher in their hearts. Even during her life-time, H.P.B. was, to some few among the theosophists, a Presence more than a personality. William Q. Judge's knowledge of her, for example, was of this order. He recognized in her at their "first" meeting, "one whom I must have known in lives long passed away," a teacher with whom he had worked before in a common purpose. Such was his consciousness of the nature of H.P.B., that he perceived within the mortal garments of her last incarnation, the *influence* and *mystic form*—to use the terms of the *S.D.*—which there masqueraded. H.P.B. gave a rare testament to their united aim when she wrote: "W.Q.J. has been a part of myself for æons past." Applying mind and heart to that continuing objective, he knew no separateness from his "lion-hearted colleague."

Declarations of this kind on the part of H. P. Blavatsky and Wm. Q. Judge did not apply to these two alone, or they would not have been published for others to read. The "eye of the Seer" will open in each one who trains himself, as did H.P.B. and W.Q.J., to conceive and execute the purposes of soul evolution, which are the purposes of the Theosophical Movement. The "past practice" which enabled Mr. Judge to recognize the Teacher and the original plan is possible *in the present* for students of Theosophy. If the lines of work are discerned and followed, if teachings and Teacher are studied *conjointly,* the earnest theosophist can prepare for the visible Messenger of the next cycle, seeing for himself the unbroken continuity from 1875 to 1975.

H. P. B. ∴

A LION-HEARTED COLLEAGUE PASSES

"On the shore stood Hiawatha,
Turned and waved his hand at parting;
On the clear and luminous water
Launched his birch canoe for sailing,
From the pebbles of the margin
Shoved it forth into the water;
Whispered to it, 'Westward! Westward!'
And with speed it darted forward.
And the evening sun descending
Set the clouds on fire with redness,
Burned the broad sky, like a prairie,
Left upon the level water
One long track and trail of splendor,
Down whose stream, as down a river,
Westward, Westward Hiawatha
Sailed into the fiery sunset,
Sailed into the purple vapors,
Sailed into the dusk of evening.

* * *

Thus departed Hiawatha,
Hiawatha the beloved, * * *
To the Islands of the Blessed."

THAT which men call death is but a change of location for the Ego, a mere transformation, a forsaking for a time of the mortal frame, a short period of rest before one reassumes another human frame in the world of mortals. The Lord of this body is nameless; dwelling in numerous tenements of clay, it appears to come and go; but neither death nor time can claim it, for it is deathless, unchangeable, and pure, beyond Time itself, and not to be measured. So our old friend and fellow-worker has merely passed for a short time out of sight, but has not given up the work begun so many ages ago—the uplifting of humanity, the destruction of the shackles that enslave the human mind.

NOTE.—This article was originally published in *The Path*, June, 1891. —Eds. THEOSOPHY.

I met H.P.B. in 1875 in the city of New York where she was living in Irving Place. There she suggested the formation of the Theosophical Society, lending to its beginning the power of her individuality and giving to its President and those who have stood by it ever since the knowledge of the existence of the Blessed Masters. In 1877 she wrote *Isis Unveiled* in my presence, and helped in the proof reading by the President of the Society. This book she declared to me then was intended to aid the cause for the advancement of which the Theosophical Society was founded. Of this I speak with knowledge, for I was present and at her request drew up the contract for its publication between her and her New York publisher. When that document was signed she said to me in the street, "Now I must go to India."

In November, 1878, she went to India and continued the work of helping her colleagues to spread the Society's influence there, working in that mysterious land until she returned to London in 1887. There was then in London but one Branch of the Society—the London Lodge—the leaders of which thought it should work only with the upper and cultured classes. The effect of H.P.B.'s coming there was that Branches began to spring up, so that now they are in many English towns, in Scotland, and in Ireland. There she founded her magazine *Lucifer,* there worked night and day for the Society loved by the core of her heart, there wrote the *Secret Doctrine,* the *Key to Theosophy,* and the *Voice of the Silence,* and there passed away from a body that had been worn out by unselfish work for the good of the few of our century but of the many in the centuries to come.

It has been said by detractors that she went to India because she merely left a barren field here, by sudden impulse and without a purpose. But the contrary is the fact. In the very beginning of the Society I drew up with my own hand at her request the diplomas of some members here and there in India who were in correspondence and were of different faiths. Some of them were Parsees. She always said she would have to go to India as soon as the Society was under way here and *Isis* should be finished. And when she had been in India some time, her many letters to me expressed her intention to return to England so as to open the movement actively and outwardly there in order that the three great points on the

world's surface—India, England, and America—should have active centres of Theosophical work. This determination was expressed to me before the attempt made by the Psychical Research Society on her reputation,—of which also I know a good deal to be used at a future time, as I was present in India before and after the alleged *exposé*—and she returned to England to carry out her purpose even in the face of charges that she could not stay in India. But to disprove these she went back to Madras, and then again rejourneyed to London.

That she always knew what would be done by the world in the way of slander and abuse I also know, for in 1875 she told me that she was then embarking on a work that would draw down upon her unmerited slander, implacable malice, uninterrupted misunderstanding, constant work, and no worldly reward. Yet in the face of this her lion heart carried her on. Nor was she unaware of the future of the Society. In 1876 she told me in detail the course of the Society's growth for future years, of its infancy, of its struggles, of its rise into the "luminous zone" of the public mind; and these prophecies are being all fulfilled.

Much has been said about her "phenomena," some denying them, others alleging trick and device. Knowing her for so many years so well, and having seen at her hands in private the production of more and more varied phenomena than it has been the good fortune of all others of her friends put together to see, I know for myself that she had control of hidden powerful laws of nature not known to our science, and I also know that she never boasted of her powers, never advertised their possession, never publicly advised anyone to attempt their acquirement, but always turned the eyes of those who could understand her to a life of altruism based on a knowledge of true philosophy. If the world thinks that her days were spent in deluding her followers by pretended phenomena, it is solely because her injudicious friends, against her expressed wish, gave out wonderful stories of "miracles" which cannot be proved to a sceptical public and which are not the aim of the Society nor were ever more than mere incidents in the life of H. P. Blavatsky.

Her aim was to elevate the race. Her method was to deal with the mind of the century as she found it, by trying to lead it on step by step; to seek out and educate a few who, appreciating the majesty

of the Secret Science and devoted to "the great orphan Humanity," could carry on her work with zeal and wisdom; to found a Society whose efforts—however small itself might be—would inject into the thought of the day the ideas, the doctrines, the nomenclature of the Wisdom Religion, so that when the next century shall have seen its 75th year the new messenger coming again into the world would find the Society still at work, the ideas sown broadcast, the nomenclature ready to give expression and body to the immutable truth, and thus to make easy the task which for her since 1875 was so difficult and so encompassed with obstacles in the very paucity of the language,—obstacles harder than all else to work against.

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

THE POLICY OF "LUCIFER"

Every hitherto far-hidden truth, whether concealed out of sight by Nature's secretiveness or human craft, must and shall be unveiled some day or other. Meanwhile, we do our best to help poor, shivering, naked Truth in her arduous progress, by cutting paths for her through the inextricable jungle of theological and social shams and lies. The best means of doing it is to open the pages of our magazine to free controversy and discussion, regardless of personalities or prejudices. It is by this means alone that he who holds correct views has a chance of proving them, hence of seeing them accepted and firmly established; and he who is mistaken, of being benefited by having his better senses awakened and directed to the other side of the question he sees but in one of its aspects.

. . . No one—of whatever rank or influence—as nothing however "time-honored," shall ever be pandered to or propitiated in our magazine. Never shall any error, sham or superstition be daubed with the whitewash of propriety, or passed over in prudent silence. As our journal was not established for a money-making enterprise, but verily as a champion for every *fact and truth,* however tabooed and unpopular—it need pander to no lie or absurd superstition. . . . The editor invites free criticism upon everything that is said in *Lucifer.*

—H.P.B. in *Lucifer,* December, 1889

FINGER-POSTS OF THE MIDDLE AGES

Jabir or Geber

WHAT the atom bomb is to the science of the twentieth century, the philosopher's stone was to the science of alchemy: a tremendous power, testing the moral force of its possessor. Today's moot question of the responsibility of the individual scientist is a social problem which the alchemists knew how to solve, and which science *without alchemy* can never master. Alchemy, wrote H. P. Blavatsky, who duplicated many of the alchemists' experiments, and demonstrated a number of their remarkable feats, *"is as old as tradition itself,"* and in that tradition a force—on no matter what plane of nature—is correlated with all other planes, physical, psychical, mental and moral. Alchemy, in one sense, is the science of the ethical integration of the man and his experiment, the discoverer and his discovery, and until this principle is recognized and practised, the achievements of modern technology will continue to run amuck, despite the best efforts of sincere humanitarians.

Alchemy (from *Al* or *El,* Mighty Sun, and *Chemi,* fire) is generally thought to have originated in Egypt (called *Khem* in ancient times), and to have been taught by Hermes Trismegistus, who is associated with Thoth-Hermes, the divine instructor of Third Race mankind.* The Hermetic philosophy is founded upon the Law of Correspondences, recorded on the Smaragdine (or Emerald) Tablet of Hermes, but H. P. Blavatsky states in the *Secret Doctrine* (II, 763 fn. and 426), that Alchemy "had its birth-place in Atlantis during the Fourth Race, and had only its *renaissance* in Egypt." This is significant in view of the fact that the Atlantean *Viwan Vidya,* "knowledge of flying in air-vehicles," is being re-discovered only in this century, and that the great energy potential of the atom may be, for all we know, a bare intimation of the solar energy harnessed for use by Atlantean "magicians."

Specific illustrations of alchemical principles, as known in our history, are the turning of base metals into gold, lighting unquenchable flames, making malleable glass, producing acari (minute insects) by a modification of potassium, and distilling the elixir of

*On alchemy and the alchemists, see Theosophy xxv, 490 and 532.

youth.* But unless these activities connote a *philosophy* as well as a process, they cannot be considered representative of alchemy itself. One who studied alchemy for the purpose of learning to make gold, or to obtain the elixir of life, would never approach the real laws of that science. He might succeed in approximating the physical processes involved, if—as is unlikely—he had enough intuition to decipher the directions given, but, failing to do so, it would be easy to conclude that no one else could succeed where he had not. If the secrets of Alchemy are well kept, their inviolability owes as much to popular ignorance of the philosophical truths they express, as to any technical disguises by way of words or symbols.

The experience of Dr. Carl Jung, founder of modern Analytical Psychology, is of special interest in this connection. (See THEOSOPHY XXIX, 547.) Dr. Jung came to the study of alchemy unwillingly at first, and only because in his practice he found that many subjective impressions showed "unmistakable similarities to alchemical symbolism." He applied himself to fathoming the psychological implications of alchemical works, and, as he afterward expressed himself, "my patience has been richly rewarded." In *The Integration of Personality* (1939), he put forward the view that alchemical operations were really an inner psychological experience, assisted by the corresponding processes which the alchemist carried out on the physical plane. "True alchemy," he wrote, "was never a business or a career, but a real *opus* that a man carried on in silent, self-sacrificing labor."

The works of Jabir—at once baffling in form and clear in spirit—are a case in point. Jabir, or Geber, as his name became in Latin translation, is "the Arabian father of European alchemy," and a pioneer acknowledged even in modern physical chemistry. He pursued the science of alchemy in the last quarter of the eighth century in Mohammedan Arabia, which had a civilization as brilliant in all branches of learning and practical knowledge as contemporary Christendom was dark. About a hundred of Geber's books are extant, and such was his reputation, we are told by E. J. Holmyard,† that "all Muslim alchemists from the ninth century onwards ac-

*See *Isis Unveiled*, I, 503; 225 et ff; 50; and 465.

†See his edition of the Works of Geber, Englished by Richard Russell, 1678. (E. P. Dutton & Co., New York: 1928.)

claimed Jabir as their master, and there is scarcely a single alchemical book in Arabic in which he is not quoted or at least mentioned." Curiously enough, no work of Geber in both Latin translation and Arabic original was extant until recently, and the famous kabalist was often regarded by modern scholars as a mythical personage. About 1925, it happened that a few of his MSS. were turned up by a German scholar in Cairo, and other facts coming to light at the same time, Geber was "established" as an actual historical figure. Obscurity has not wholly departed from him even yet, however, since Holmyard's 1928 reprint of the seventeenth-century translation of "The Works of Geber"—comprising only a few of his books—is an extremely rare volume.

As might be expected with an occultist, "Of the details of his life Jabir is reticent . . .", but some historians have called him an "Illuminated Monarch of India." It is evident that he had studied many occult subjects, besides alchemy, and that he possessed an encyclopedic knowledge covering all branches of learning, "from the art of warfare to that of music," and was proficient in medicine. Notwithstanding Jabir's position among his fellow scientists, and his admitted contributions to the theory and practice of chemistry, he is taken to task by Holmyard for "leanings to mysticism and superstition." Thorndike in *History of Magic and Experimental Science* (I, 763) also betrays an impatience with the continuance, in Arabic alchemy, of "the fantastic mysticism and obscurity, the astrology and magic, of the ancient Greek alchemists."

In respect to alchemy, it is necessary to examine certain theories of the Greek philosophers concerning the constitution of metals—theories Jabir also held. It was taught that all substances are composed of four elements (fire, air, water and earth, themselves interconvertible), but that the immediate constituents of minerals and metals are two exhalations—an "earthy smoke" on the way to becoming fire, and a "watery vapour" on the way to becoming air. (It may be noted that both these processes can be accomplished by *fire.*) These exhalations, when imprisoned in the earth, form minerals if the smoky vapour predominates, and metals by a predominance of the watery vapour.

Jabir taught that the exhalations underwent an intermediate transformation, into sulphur (from the dry or smoky vapour) and

mercury (from watery vapour), which then formed metals, by combining in different proportions and with varying degrees of purity. When a natural equilibrium and complete purity obtained with these two elements, the result was the most perfect of metals, gold. Jabir further concluded that the sulphur and mercury in question were not the ordinary substances known by those names, but hypothetical elements which the physical substances approximate. Dr. Holmyard comments that this hypothesis has "all the bad qualities which Lavoisier found in the theory of phlogiston." The phlogiston theory itself, he remarks, was "a direct descendant of Jabir's theory of the constitution of metals." This is of interest because Phlogiston is the name given to the principle of fire regarded as a substance, and the theory reflects the doctrine of the fire-philosophers —that fire, the symbol of Deity, is the source of material atoms, and "the container of the spiritual and psychic Forces energizing them." (See *Theosophical Glossary,* "Fire-Philosophers.") It is a theosophical teaching that "matter" and "force," as well as electricity, magnetism, fire, light and heat, are all aspects of one Principle.

Hasting's *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* (I, 291), mentions another "curious idea frequently expressed by alchemists, that of the 'life' of the mineral. The metal or the mineral is really regarded as a living being, which is engendered and develops in the womb of the earth, where it is subjected to various conditions, such as help or hinder its perfection." In every body there is considered to be a material part and a spiritual part, body and soul.

> A common task for chemists consists in giving a soul to each body, by first purifying souls and bodies, and then infusing into each body the soul which suits it. Geber, still following the idea that there were certain injuries caused by nature, even speaks of 'restoring' to the body the soul which 'has gone out of it'; this is another aspect of a chemical operation; thus, mercury is the soul which suits gold and the other metals. The spirit also is capable of a sort of education; not only must it be fit to unite forcibly with its body, and for that reason be pure, but it must also be firm, it must resist fire, and to this end must, as far as possible, partake of the nature of fire.
>
> In practice, the aim of the alchemist's efforts is to find the substance, a living substance, 'elixir' or spirit, which, when combined with the body of the imperfect metal, previously prepared and purified, will change it into perfect metal.

Students of *The Ocean of Theosophy* will recognize in this a familiar teaching. Mr. Judge writes (p. 60): "What then is the universe for, and for what final purpose is man the immortal thinker here in evolution? It is all for the experience and emancipation of the soul, for the purpose of raising the entire mass of manifested matter up to the stature, nature, and dignity of conscious god-hood." The close interweaving of the evolution of "spirit" and "matter," or soul and body, through the efforts of the self-conscious ego, would be an impossible doctrine if spirit, soul, mind, and matter were essentially different and discrete. A miracle—creation—would be required to change a thing (matter) into a being (spirit); but if spirit is potential in every atom of matter, and if both are poles of the same Substance-Principle, Spirit-Matter, the *One* Life, it follows that the gradual perfection of finer and finer instruments permits the progressive incarnation of spirit and soul in matter, fused by the fire of mind. Soul and "body" then partake of the nature of fire, in the language of alchemy, or perhaps of what H. P. Blavatsky referred to as the luminous "fire mist," the ethereal stuff from which the Universe was formed.

The doctrines of the alchemists are frequently quoted by the messenger of Theosophy in the nineteenth century, for across many centuries their works kept "in solution" certain central teachings of the wisdom-religion, as well as the age-old rules for occult students and experimenters. Theosophy in its present form contains direct instruction in philosophical concepts about which the alchemists could exchange only hints and symbols, correspondences and analogies. Also, both H.P.B. and W.Q.J. described and explained much of moral, mental and psychic discipline which in other ages had been confined to the temples and the Mystery schools. That a greater portion of the Secret Doctrine has been placed before the minds of men in the twentieth century, is by way of being a sign that in this age, not only a few men here and there, sequestered in laboratories and publishing their findings in a guarded cipher for co-disciples, but every man—insofar as he is able and to the degree of his fellowship with mankind as a whole—is to learn the responsibility of power over nature.

Extracts from the writings of Geber, in succeeding issues of THEOSOPHY, will give some idea of the range of philosophy con-

tained in alchemical writings. It will be seen that the ideas and the language of the alchemists are without appeal for the literal-minded, for "the mentally lazy or obtuse," in H. P. Blavatsky's phrase. Moral intuition can reveal to a man the hidden powers and faculties found alike in great nature and in the human being, and that same intuition will govern him in the right use of such occult knowledge. Without intuition, joined to moral power, the secrets of life and death become the secrets of death only. Thus the alchemist sought, by every means at his command, to protect the man of evil motive, as well as one of indifferent morality, from knowledge that would implement ill-will and further pervert their spiritual destiny.

The true alchemists, as delineated by H. P. Blavatsky (*Isis*, I, 66-7), are extraordinary in knowledge, power, and responsibility:

> Men possessed of such knowledge and exercising such powers patiently toiled for something better than the vain glory of a passing fame. Seeking it not, they became immortal, as do all who labor for the good of the race, forgetful of mean self. Illuminated with the light of eternal truth, these rich-poor alchemists fixed their attention upon the things that lie beyond the common ken, recognizing nothing inscrutable but the First Cause, and finding no question unsolvable. To dare, to know, to will, and REMAIN SILENT, was their constant rule; to be beneficent, unselfish, and unpretending, were, with them, spontaneous impulses. Disdaining the rewards of petty traffic, spurning wealth, luxury, pomp, and worldly power, they aspired to knowledge as the most satisfying of all acquisitions. They esteemed poverty, hunger, toil, and the evil report of men, as none too great a price to pay for its achievement.

Alchemy in our day appears in new guises, and in many partial forms, but the *Magnum Opus*, or Great Work, of these early scientists—the transmutation of base "metals" into gold in their own nature—is still the one all-inclusive science of life spiritual and physical: "Man is the philosopher's *stone* spiritually," writes H. P. Blavatsky.

MIND OF THE AGE

I

NOT to point with pride nor view with alarm, but to seek a clearer and more vital understanding, is the first psychological implication of the Theosophical philosophy. The Founder of the Theosophical Movement, in 1875, approached neither the typical Christian of her day, the typical materialist, nor the typical Spiritualist with an attitude of derision or personal superiority. The volumes, *Isis Unveiled* and the *Secret Doctrine,* gave successive evidence that their author regarded all peculiarities of human thought and temperament as worth meeting, initially, on their own levels. H. P. Blavatsky asserted many times in her *Key to Theosophy* that every Theosophist, in order to merit the name, will have to be continually *open-minded,* in recognition of the fact that every human impulse and tendency is a part of himself. The third fundamental proposition of Theosophical philosophy, as outlined in the *Secret Doctrine,* gives a philosophical basis for this perception. All beings, according to what has been called the "pivotal doctrine of the esoteric philosophy," either have passed or will pass through all experiences—and therefore through all psychological states. In this doctrine is implicit another assertion—that the fundamental object of human life is to learn how to participate in the conditions, both inner and outer, of any and all beings on the earth. Prejudices and distinctions, even those apparently quite virtuous, serve as a barrier against communication with others who are no less Souls than ourselves. It is for this reason that the Theosophical philosophy provides the most solid ground amidst many confused modern theories for combating every type of prejudice, disdain, or exclusiveness.

To understand "the mind of our age," is now and will forever be the problem of understanding our own minds. Just as we are demonstrably interdependent economically and politically, so are we, in the Theosophical view, interdependent emotionally, mentally and morally. There is no idea, no impulse, no tendency which is not in some measure our own, for these exist in the psychic atmosphere which our inner selves breathe daily. The mere fact that we may

"resist" certain pollutions of that atmosphere does not alter the fact that even the wayward and destructive thoughts which pass into our minds, only to be immediately rejected, are none the less points of contact between ourselves and other human beings. It is also a fact in the very old story of self-discipline that the temptations, doubts, and fears which seem so easy to resist at one time and at one level of experience, may be quite another matter when encountered in a new situation. We are never too far from our brothers—be they Catholics, Spiritualists or materialists—and if we ever were *too* far from them, we would have left this earth, for better or for worse, as do the Dharmakayas of Eastern tradition when they achieve individual salvation. From the Buddha of India are said to have come the words, "I am as all these men," and somehow we know that this expression was not a maudlin sentiment but a reality of feeling. The degree to which Walt Whitman might be considered a part of the larger Theosophical Movement is specifically the degree to which he voiced the same thought. To Whitman, the most apparently depraved of earth's creatures were still close to his mind and heart.

No one finds it easy to define the characteristic problems of the twentieth century. These are problems relating to "the State," to war, to personal morality, to religion and to science. And the largest problem of all is whether we can learn to really trust anyone. Our problems are certainly related to crucial moments of decision that occurred before this century began. For the theosophist, it may be advisable to endeavor to estimate the effect of both the partial success and the "failure" of the Theosophical Movement at the close of the last one-hundred-year period. The impulsion given by H. P. Blavatsky to the work of the Theosophical Society was directed towards a reclamation of moral idealism from the confused tangle of materialized religious and social customs. To revive a pure concept of Religion which would allow transmutation of "Christian" idealism into a world view, and therefore to reform and improve the social attitudes built upon provincial forms of Christianity, were among her chief focal points of concentration.

The world always has its conceptions of morality, usually admixtures of intuitive idealism and self-righteousness. Every man has some inner desire to live a nobler and more inspiring life,

yet, since his aspirations are so much beyond his immediate abilities of self-control, a psychological tendency to prove himself "at least better than some people" also asserts itself. The bigoted aspects of religions are mass defense-mechanisms, enabling one to say, in effect, "I secretly know I am not a noble man, but it makes me feel better to think I am nobler than others." No one has an "intuition" that he should be self-righteous or prejudiced, while it *may* be a genuine inner voice which recognizes in the example of Jesus a light on the path of soul, or which leads to the conclusion that there must be *something* more important than the earthly life we know. Both human characteristics paralleled the course of Christian history. Pure-minded and inspired men existed as staunch followers of the accepted faith. Side by side with them in *apparent* belief were numbers of bigots and hypocrites, whose only interest in any religion could be little more than self-justification.

As civilizations approach crucial cycles in social and educational development—the case with the Western world in the latter part of the nineteenth century—either "religion" is saved by an idealism not preoccupied with personal self-esteem, or, limited and prideful idealism and popular religious standards fall together. For men are content to fool themselves only so long; finally, they tire of hypocrisy, even though it be of their own making. The Christian religion, was not, on the whole, making the world better, because it was not helping men to be honest.

The undermining of Christian dogma by the growing science of the nineteenth century brought an opportunity for men to separate the religious beliefs which genuinely inspired them from the beliefs which were purely formal and personal. The Theosophical Movement offered a rational basis for the re-examination of such questions as man's "divine origin" and immortality, to those whose genuine religious sense was strong. Upon these matters, too, rested the significance of morality, for if man were the casually constructed animal which science seemed intent upon proving he was, then morality was nothing but social expedience. The task of first importance, in the minds of the founders of the Theosophical Movement, was the defense and vivification of morality. But the obstacles in the way of spreading a strong moral consciousness were great. Not only was the new science materialistic and amoral, but

the habits of thought and action generated by secularized Christianity tended in much the same direction. From all sides poured the psychic forces generated by men who were trying to prove their doubtful moral worth by claiming that others were more mistaken than they were. Some of these crowded under the banner of science, others professed allegiance to religion, while the real scientists and those consecrated to a genuine religious *life* stood apart—as do always the thoughtful and unprejudiced.

There were specific reasons why a clear and inspiring basis for morality needed enunciation. The claws of empire were growing sharper, the ambitions for domination of world trade clashing more stridently, the weapons of imperialist and nationalistic war becoming more terrible, while the increased population of the world gave all these added momentum. Huge conflicts, as predicted by H. P. Blavatsky, were inevitable, for a densely populated world cannot indulge in the emotions of greed, prejudice and fear without more serious consequences than would arise if the concentration of power were small. If man's relation to his fellows was that of an animal creature whose only hope was to bite first that he be not bitten, or a creature of God who must wash away his own guilt by crushing his inferiors, the story could be written only in the ink of blood. This was the grim fate of Kali-Yuga—the intensification of all the *externally feared forces* which move men, so that finally the consequences of callous and brutal thinking would come to the fruition demanded by natural law. The seeds of World War were sown, for as men believed their salvation to be in physical force, or that "might" is a sign of divine grace, slowly but surely they worked toward a series of both offensive and defensive alignments which ultimately involved every concentrated source of power. Then came the spark and the explosion—the Armageddon originally caused by a degrading psychology.

The significance of the individual man's sense of justice, and his right to independent choice and action, were engulfed in mass movements for Power. Individual freedom fought a losing battle—at a time when no clear basis remained for believing the individual man to be important. This, then, was the setting for one of the most pressing dilemmas of the modern man—a problem which, in the mind of the age, is still surrounded by confusion. Today men in

all countries tend to move as automatons, caught in the national or social organizations devised to gain and hold power. Rejection of the principle of conscription was not strong enough to hold back the tide.

This is the problem of international and social morality: What shall we do about Germany, Japan, or Russia? (And they are wondering, in other terms, what to do about us.) On what basis shall we act? What is the most we can expect from whatever method we choose? Can the individual actually do anything besides accept the fact that he is hopelessly caught in a power-maddened world, fight the wars, and suffer the consequences of internal conflict which are bound to come his way? So far, this is the depressing conclusion which most people seem to have reached. They do not *wish* to accept this conclusion. They wish, perhaps without knowing it, for that basis for a belief in moral man which the specifics of Theosophical philosophy provide.

Politically and socially, the average man lives in a constant nightmare, from which there is no escape save in distracting dissipation. Buchenwald, Pearl Harbor, Hiroshima, purges in Russia and witch-hunts for Communists in the United States—these are some of the more lurid sequences in the bad dream. It is little wonder that men seek escape, that few codes of personal morality withstand the impact. Fear of a world which apparently cannot be trusted, is not a helpful background for efforts at quiet self-discipline.

The Hermetic Way

If a man would follow in the steps of the Hermetic philosophers, he must prepare himself beforehand for martyrdom. He must give up personal pride and all selfish purposes, and be ready for everlasting encounters with friends and foes. He must part, once for all, with every remembrance of his earlier ideas, on all and on everything. Existing religions, knowledge, science, must re-become a blank book for him, as in the days of his babyhood, for if he wants to succeed he must learn a new alphabet on the lap of Mother Nature, every letter of which will afford a new insight to him, every syllable and word an unexpected revelation. —H.P.B.

STUDIES IN KARMA

The Soul of Russia

TO understand is always one of the most difficult of human tasks. "I do not believe," wrote that able commentator on foreign affairs, Harold Nicolson (*Small Talk,* 1937), "that amity between nations can durably be based upon pleasant feelings. It can be based only upon hard thinking." That is so emphatically true where nations are divided because of ideological differences of an acute nature, as in the case of Soviet Russia and the countries that pay allegiance to the liberty of the individual *vis-a-vis* the State. Vilification and abuse solve nothing; they are weapons in the propaganda armoury. "I admit that the Russians are hard to get on with," said Professor Robert M. Hutchins in a lecture before the Modern Forum, Los Angeles (March 25, 1946), and he goes on to suggest, in a later address (November 18, 1946) that if we want world peace, a world community, and a world state that will last, "we must promote a moral, intellectual, and spiritual revolution throughout the world." For this, it is true that a clarification of educational ideals is needed, as Dr. Hutchins never wearies of telling us. But what if the unassailable basis for union is absent in the international field, namely, "similarity of aim, purpose, and teaching"? It is in the highest degree foolish to imagine, as so many "idealists" do, that the basic cleavage between Soviet Russia and Western countries "is one of temperament rather than of principle . . . scarcely more than a difference of emphasis." This is what Mr. Edward Crankshaw does in his *Russia and the Russians* (Macmillan, 1947), although his work makes it abundantly clear that Stalin, the Marxist, believes in the inevitability of world revolution, and that "the ruthless destruction of innumerable minds is practised in Soviet Russia today with a single-mindedness and efficiency very much in excess of that attained by any Tsar who ever lived."

For theosophists, the issue between freedom and tyranny will always be a clear one. As against "violence, arbitrary law, sustained privation, blind trampling stupidity, and bodily slavery, with no compensating freedom for the spirit" (Mr. Crankshaw paints Soviet

Russia in these particular colours), they will bear witness to the prophecy of a great Russian—"woe to the twentieth century, if the now reigning school of thought prevails, for Spirit would once more be made captive and silenced till the end of the now coming age" ("The Tidal Wave," THEOSOPHY XXVII, 496). At the same time Mme. H. P. Blavatsky made it clear as to who would be the teachers and benefactors of the masses in the present century: "those who, amidst the present wholesale dominion of the worship of matter, material interests and SELFISHNESS, will have bravely fought for human rights and *man's divine nature.*" Only Theosophy "can gradually create a mankind as harmonious and as simple-souled as Kosmos itself."

The historical and cultural cycles that divide us from this desirable consummation are clearly to be discerned, not least by the Russian writers of last century who knew that Russia would never fulfil her destiny except by self-sacrifice. There is, however, another alternative which is significant. Mr. Crankshaw makes much of a phrase of Leontiev: "Sometimes I dream that a Russian Tsar may put himself at the head of the Socialist Movement and organise it as Constantine organised Christianity." Presumably, Marxist dialectics are to replace the dusty dogmas of ecclesiastical Christianity! Indeed, Mr. Crankshaw himself works out the identification between the young Communist world and the Catholic hierarchy when its sense of mission was strongest. He puts "Marx and Engels combined . . . into the category of Buddha, Jesus Christ, Confucius, and Mohammed." Judging by the enormous hold that Communist ideology is exercising over minds in Asia, it is much more likely that we shall see one of Mme. Blavatsky's prophecies come true, with "a new invasion of an Attilla from the far East" (THEOSOPHY XXVIII, 538). The drama is still being played out in the Russian soul, as in the souls of countries and individuals the world over. Tolstoy wrote of man's freedom as consisting precisely in the fact that, while his external reactions are governed by the pattern of his own nature and the pressure of the circumstances of his daily life, he is at the same time completely unhindered in respect of the assimilation of truth *(The Kingdom of God is Within You).*

It was the pressure of historical events that led to the negative acceptance by the Russian masses of the gospel of Marx-Lenin-

Stalin in preference to that of Dostoievsky-Tolstoy-Blavatsky—if we may use these names as representing the forces struggling for survival in the national being. Yet, however far totalitarianism may go, the power of assimilating truth remains, even though in *pralaya*. The greatest Russian of them all, H. P. Blavatsky, became an American citizen, and, while always retaining her love for the land of her birth, has been ignored completely in estimates of Russian formative influences on world thought and affairs. In 1880 she delineated the tendencies making for the Soviet Revolution.* "We must not forget the lessons of history," she wrote, "which has more than once shown us how the very vastness of an empire, and lack of a common unity among its subjects, have proved at some supreme crisis the most potent elements of its downfall." She added that if the social ethics of then contemporary Russia were as described by a writer in an influential Russian magazine of the day, *Rousskeye Ryetch,* then the country "must have reached that culminating point from which it must either fall into the mire of dissolution, like old Rome, or gravitate towards regeneration through all the horrors and chaos of a 'Reign of Terror'." The occasion and the man were not wanting in 1917. Peoples everywhere today would do well to remember the old political doctrine that no laws can preserve liberty, if the people themselves have become corrupted. Even in such a ruthless work as Machiavelli's *Prince,* the truth is made clear:

> Where the people are not corrupt, tumults and commotions cannot injure any state; but where they are degenerate the best laws and institutions will be deprived of all their efficacy.

In the Russian article already quoted, Mme. Blavatsky wrote of the black fungus of Nihilism springing from social rottenness. The "unquiet spirit of sweeping negation," represented by the character of Bazarof in Turgeniev's *Fathers and Sons* (published in 1862), became like a Frankenstein monster in subsequent years, "the ranting spectre of the Nihilist delirium." The other aspect of the situation, as it faced the world in the nineties of last century, and certainly confronts it today, was summarized admirably by Mme. Blavatsky in a defence of Tolstoy's *The Kreutzer Sonata* (1889), which appeared in *Lucifer,* July, 1890: "The accepted creeds of the civilized nations have lost their restraining influence on almost every class of

*See "The History of 'A Book'," which appeared in the Allahabad (India) *Pioneer,* March 12, 1880. (Reprinted in *A Modern Panarion,* p. 229.)

society; nor have they ever had any other restraint save that of physical fear, the dread of theocratic thumb-screws and hell-tortures." Both active Nihilism and the confusions of civilized mankind meet their antithesis in the teaching as to the moral responsibility of the individual, and in the re-examination of the Christian gospels, which were such marked features of the later writings of Tolstoy. His treatise *On Life* (1887) was commented on favourably by Mme. Blavatsky in *Lucifer* for November, 1887.

Will Russia return to her true *dharma?* Time alone will tell. But, in the vicissitudes of the years ahead, she may remember (as the rest of the world might well do) Tolstoy's words. "Immorality," he wrote, "does not consist in physical acts alone, but, on the contrary, in liberating oneself from all moral obligation which such acts impose." Further, both the true objective and the rationale of spiritual progress were indicated by him in his *Diaries* for 1895-99, from which the following extracts are quoted by Mr. Derrick Leon in his excellent biography, *Tolstoy: His Life and Work* (1944):

> Personal effort, no matter how small, is the essential thing. To conquer laziness, gluttony, envy, anger and depression—this is the most important thing in the world; it is the testimony of the divine in life, it is Karma, the development of the self.
>
> It is essential to separate your true self from that which is offended and angry: to remember that this is neither an obstacle nor a casual misfortune which is thrust upon you, but is one of the problems of your life; and above all to realize that if you feel animosity towards anyone, or anyone feels animosity towards you, that you alone are to blame. And as soon as you recognize your fault, you become calm.
>
> It is easier to write ten volumes of philosophy than to put a single precept into practice.

It is not without special interest to theosophical students to find Tolstoy referring to Karma, and Mr. Derrick Leon stating his own conviction that "the most interesting commentary upon *On Life* was written by Tolstoy's remarkable fellow-countrywoman Mme. Blavatsky." He also mentions that in the 1890's Tolstoy was sent by a Hindu admirer an "exquisite book of Hindu wisdom" (to use Tolstoy's phrase), *Raja Yoga or Conquering Internal Nature,* by Swami Vivekananda, which appears to have exerted a considerable influence upon his thoughts. Perhaps the Russian enigma will never be solved without the most ancient Aryan philosophy?

YOUTH-COMPANIONS ASK—

WHY *is there anything? Why did we ever begin?*

These are questions which can be either profound or pointless. They may be profound when asked and answered by oneself; pointless and "unanswerable" if they deny or ignore the Self. Unless we take it as an axiom that there *is* a Reality, it is impossible to move to any conclusion: a man must exist, before he can ask why he exists.

We may sometimes forget that, no matter how much diversity we see, diversity is bounded on all sides by the infinite circle of Unity. Whether recognized or not, all questions arise from and are based on that One Reality, just as they, along with all manifestation, are finally resolved into that Reality. The question of why there is anything is grounded in the perception that *something is.* Once we recognize that there is always something—or, to our minds, Nothing—that precedes and makes possible our questioning of all other things, we have accepted the first inescapable and unexplainable premise. We have passed from an infinite Incomprehensible to the finite world which alone our minds are capable of enclosing.

The Theosophical philosophy contains answers to the questions of why we are here, what the universe is for, and the reason for all *manifestation,* in one simple word—Evolution. The question of why there is any "thing" or being to evolve is unanswerable, for no mind can question its own existence. We cannot, for example, think ourselves out of existence, for, though we abolish worlds and universes in our minds, we are still there, watching the destruction of *things.* In the same way, we cannot think ourselves *into* existence. We are. "There is no existence for that which does not exist, nor is there any non-existence for what exists," says the *Gita,* and, on that point, there is no more to say.

Simple though this principle is, few seem inclined to accept as a starting point the concept of a Boundless Unknown as the source of all. Those who believe in some form of Christianity take the "Unknown" part, but reject the idea of its being Boundless: a limited unknown is just another way of saying "personal god." Others, wary of an Unknown which has to be worshipped, believe

that there is no reality which cannot be seen, weighed or measured. Scientists, therefore, are likely to accept the idea of boundlessness, but it is for them a material, knowable source.

Descartes reasoned from the postulate: "I think, therefore I am." For our purposes, we might change this a little, starting with the most basic and self-evident fact—"I am." It might be argued that we only think that we think, and that therefore Descartes' statement is not a premise, but already a conclusion. What if he had said, "I am, therefore I think"? Existence, the bare fact of being, is the one incontrovertible fact in the experience of all men.

Is there anything wrong with taking very young children—sometimes even babies—to the movies? I can't trace it any further than an uncomfortable feeling that they can't do much else but suffer from the unnatural noise and violence and passion which seem to characterize most movie scripts.

Perhaps that "uncomfortable feeling" is the surest guide we have to the right and wrong in such a case. Every parent, no matter what his limitations in other directions, instinctively feels that an infant is almost completely helpless, needing all the protection that can be afforded by his natural environment. This must be why there is the almost universal feeling that a kind of silence and secrecy should surround birth and infancy.

The "infant" makes one choice: He chooses the environment into which he will incarnate and the parents to whom he will come. From that point, we may say, the causal life of the Ego runs underground, to gradually emerge once more with the progressive incarnation of Manas. The coming of a child is the result of a "compact" made between that soul and the parents who are to provide it with its instruments. The formation of those instruments, the drawing out of latent tendencies, is a karmic trust held by the parents until such time as the "child" Ego incarnates more fully and assumes its own responsibility.

The family has a current of its own, and it would seem that in that current, free from the intrusion of "unnatural" events, lies the only possible fulfilment of the trust that underlies every birth. Parents can rightly consider themselves responsible for the environ-

ment with which they supply the child—for the choices which they make for him, since he is obviously not capable of making them for himself. While the environment of the fully incarnated man is what he grows in, the environment of the infant is, literally, what he grows from.

Tom Paine remarked that any system of religion with anything in it that shocks the mind of a child cannot be a true system. If a parent sees qualities in some movies which *would* shock the mind of a child, is not he, as well as the child, benefited by avoiding those movies? Perhaps by considering more the natural needs of children than the conditioned desires—unchild-like, though often childish—of an adult, one would draw nearer to the "child state he has lost," which is a symbol of the purity and trustfulness that each man must consciously regain.

What about the skandhas? How can we be sure that everything that comes to us actually belongs to us?

The elements of such surety precipitate themselves gradually from a serious analysis of our day-by-day experiences. We need to see at the outset that we ourselves are, finally and inevitably, the real determinants of any experience we go through. An experience is only the raw material from which we select the elements we have affinities for. From the same type of earth, containing exactly the same elements in exactly the same proportions, different varieties of plants will select different foods. As the *Gita* suggests, contrasting the Sage with the ordinary man: "What is night to those who are unenlightened, is as day to his gaze; what seems to them as day is known to him as night—the night of ignorance."

Just as we are given to seeing in other people or in ourselves only that which we are ready or "want" to see, so it is in fact with every experience that comes to us. We alter the polarity—by means of the skandhas or *tendencies in ourselves*—of everything around us. The magnet unfailingly attracts to itself what is homogeneous to it. We are continually magnetizing—attracting or repelling—*ideas* by the ever-active "electro-magnetic field" of our attitude of mind.

"THEOSOPHIST" EDITORIAL NOTES

IV: God in Man

A PERFECT man is not made to order but is a product of evolution. Wisdom is not a matter of book-learning but of growth. General rules for conduct can be given, but to apply them properly, the power of discrimination is necessary. A man, who is good by the yard or according to prescription, is usually a sort of a goody-goody fellow, such as we find amongst church-members, and who are usually the pride of the congregation. They do what they believe to be good, because it is prescribed; they are in abject fear of punishment and afraid to displease God. The good they do goes very much against their own inclination, and they often pretend to hate sin, while they actually are craving for it. The moral world may be compared to a pair of scales. Insanity sits on both ends of the beam, while wisdom rests in the middle. A person, who would give away his coat to the first one who asks for it, would be a fool, and he, who, after having received a blow on one cheek, would present his other cheek to get another blow, would be a vain idiot and a coward, and would richly deserve a good many blows. The sayings of Christ, of Buddha, Confucius and others, are represented in the flowery language of the East, and he, who takes them in their literal sense, makes as great a mistake as he who rejects them. If they preach charity, they do not want to make us spendthrifts; if they inculcate humility, they do not want to create cowards; if they teach unselfishness, they do not want us to become beggars, who have to depend on the labors of others for subsistence. Justice means justice to ourselves as well as justice to others. And he, who errs on one side, is as much in error as he who errs on the other side. There is often the greatest similarity between a great saint and a great sinner; the former is good without being sagacious, the other is sagacious without being good. Torquemada and Robespierre represent the opposite poles and both were unselfish. Their opinions were opposite, and yet they both committed the same crimes against nature. They were great saints and great criminals,

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Note.—Collated from the magazine H. P. Blavatsky edited in India.—Eds. Theosophy.

and yet they were great men, because they acted up to a principle without taking their personal advantages into consideration. A virtue, practised without moderation, becomes a crime. To know how to find the point of equilibrium is the great secret of the Adept, that cannot be told but must be learned by experience, when sagacity and goodness will be united in wisdom.

[Our correspondent] falls into a very common error in speaking of the powers and privileges of an adept. One, who has attained this stage, can neither coin money, make bars of gold, nor create clothing for himself, nor get his food from the ether. This is the custom of the practitioners of that debased science called Black Magic. The true Adept would cease to be such if he should apply his psychic powers to selfish ends. For the good of the deserving poor or suffering, or of Humanity in the mass, he is at liberty to make use of them under exceptional circumstances. In point of fact, this is one chief aim in view in his adeptship, and there are crises where a number of Adepts are said to combine their psychical powers for the good of a portion or the whole of the race, as upon the lowest plane of action, a number of men combine their muscular strength for a mechanical result. The aspiration of the would-be Adept is to learn that he may teach, become wise that he may understand, and spiritually strong that he may help the weak but willing. If our correspondent still clamours for a specific definition of the steps of self-denying philanthropy by which one may evolve out of the brutal into the spiritual plane, we must point him to those terse and most simple codes of ethics, which we have inherited from all the ancients, and which are endorsed by all the best modern sages. Zoroaster's religion is distilled into three words, which mean "Good thoughts: Good words: Good deeds." One need not care if he be in Sherman, Texas, or Madras, India, if he be minded to try the prescription. And *Nirvana,* or *Mukti,* is equi-distant from both! (January, 1885)

[*A correspondent laments "archaeological gropings in the dark," and asks, "Shall we continue in this miserable helpless state, when we have guiding angels in the background?"*—Eds. THEOSOPHY.]

Our Brother should not lose sight of the fact that the "guiding angels in the background" cannot work miracles. Admittedly,

blind superstition, dogmatic scepticism and ignorant fanaticism reign supreme every where. Can these be dispelled in a few short years, when they are the outgrowth of numberless ages? The "Masters" have taken advantage of every possible opportunity to bring people to do *their* duty, by bringing the truth to light for them. . . . They, who can look beneath the surface know that action and reaction being equal, no violent changes can be safely introduced, however beneficial they may appear to be. The utmost that can be done under these circumstances is to give now and then side glimpses, so that those who are capable of rising above the ordinary level and have developed their penetrating faculty may profit by them and thus become more useful to their fellowmen.

(February, 1884)

[*Publishing extracts translated from two German pamphlets by Baron du Prel, "The Cosmic Position of Man," and "The Janus-Facedness of Man," H.P.B. remarked editorially, "They are profoundly suggestive* PER SE *and go far to prove the theory of the simultaneous evolution and growth of the same ideas on various and widely separated points of the globe." Of du Prel, she wrote, "Truly the author of the work reviewed is a born Theosophist,—or shall we say* OCCULTIST? *At any rate, here we have one more profound and unprejudiced thinker. May our present race evolute many more such philosophers for the greater glory of* TRUTH*!" The following paragraphs appeared as footnotes to the review, and are prefaced in each case by the sentence commented upon.*—Eds. THEOSOPHY.]

"Suppose our senses could be made to undergo some change, while the universe remained all along the same, it is evident quite a new world would arise before us, though objectively and materially the world would be exactly the same as it was before."

And this is precisely the change claimed by the initiated adepts of Occultism; and that alone is sufficient to account for their great opposition to many a scientific axiom of modern science and the greater trustworthiness of the teachings of the former. Once that we admit the possibility of such a "change," and as a result therefrom, the greater acuteness and perfection of all their senses—granting even that the 6th and 7th sense do not exist for any one outside

those who claim either of them or both, and thus cannot be proved scientifically—we have to admit at any rate that they see, hear, taste, feel, and smell more acutely than the rest of humanity, untrained and uninitiated: how can we then avoid trusting more in *their* than in our senses? And yet the same traveller who will unhesitatingly trust to the acuteness of the eye or ear of his red-Indian guide in preference to his own—will deny the existence and even the possibility of a series of such faculties being developed in an Asiatic *adept!*

* * * * *

"[The materialist] will not understand that one and the same objective world, may and must appear subjectively different to different organisations [of senses]."

Apart and quite distinct from the variety in the subjective perceptions of the one and same object—by mankind in general,—stands the *unvarying* perception of the trained Occultist. Perceiving the *actuality, for him* the modes of the presentation of an object cannot vary; for the initiated adept perceives and discerns the ultimate and actual state of things in nature by means of his spiritual perception, trammelled by none of his physical senses, and only when the former have been called forth from their latent into their active state and developed sufficiently to stand the final tests of initiation. Therefore, this abnormal (in our present race only) faculty has nought to do with the common perceptions and their various modes, and if the materialist is sceptical as to the latter, how can he be made to believe in the existence of the former—a faculty of which he knows less than of the man in the moon!

(February, 1884)

[*An account of the life of Sankaracharya* (THEOSOPHIST I, 71, 89, *and* 203) *mentions an incident where the teacher "entrusted his own body to the charge of his pupils, and caused his soul to enter the corpse" of a certain king Amaraka, resuscitating the body of the monarch. Sankara reigned for a time as Amaraka, meantime preparing himself, by study and practice, to "answer the query of the cunning wife of Mandana"—an incarnation of Saraswati. (Saraswati or Vach, the wife and daughter of Brahma, is, according to H.P.B.,*

the goddess of speech and "of sacred or esoteric knowledge and wisdom.") The pupils left in charge of Sankara's body, when the time-limit had passed, went in search of their master. Hearing of King Amaraka's preternatural resuscitation, they knew they had found Sankara, and, disguised as singers, they sought "to recall him to his own body and to the prosecution of his labors." Their music "reached the inner consciousness of Sankara in his borrowed body," and he retransferred himself to his own body, "left the empty rajah to die once more," and returned as Sankara to answer Saraswati. A footnote relates to this circumstance.]

The power of the Yogi to quit his own body and enter and animate that of another person, though affirmed by Patanjali and included among the Siddhis of Krishna, is discredited by Europeanized young Indians. Naturally enough, since, as Western biologists deny a soul to man, it is an unthinkable proposition to them that the Yogi's soul should be able to enter another's body. That such an unreasoning infidelity should prevail among the pupils of European schools, is quite reason enough why an effort should be made to revive in India those schools of Psychology in which the Aryan youth were theoretically and practically taught the occult laws of Man and Nature. We, who have at least some trifling acquaintance with modern science, do not hesitate to affirm our belief that this temporary transmigration of souls is possible. We may even go so far as to say that the phenomenon has been experimentally proved to us—in New York, among other places. And, since we would be among the last to require so marvellous a statement to be accepted upon any one's unsupported testimony, we urge our readers to first study Aryan literature, and then get from personal experience the corroborative evidence. The result must inevitably be to satisfy every honest enquirer that Patanjali and Sankaracharya did, and Tyndall, Carpenter and Huxley do not, know the secrets of our being. (January, 1880)

[*"A Treatise on the Yoga Philosophy," by an Anglo-Indian doctor, N. C. Paul, was published at Benares about 1850, and reprinted in the* THEOSOPHIST, *beginning in September, 1880 (*I, *312;* II, *4, 29, 72, and 144), with comments introduced by H.P.B. to clarify "the* VITAL *difference between the* RAJA *and* HATHA *Yogis."*]

This system [Hatha Yoga], evolved by long ages of practice until it was brought to bear the above-described results, was not practised in India alone in the days of antiquity. The greatest philosophers of all countries sought to acquire these powers; and certainly, behind the external ridiculous postures of the Yogis of to-day, lies concealed the profound wisdom of the archaic ages; one that included among other things a perfect knowledge of what are now termed physiology and psychology. Ammonius Saccas, Porphyry, Proclus and others practised it in Egypt; and Greece and Rome did not shrink even at all in their time of philosophical glory, to follow suit. Pythagoras speaks of the celestial music of the spheres that one hears in hours of ecstacy; Zeno finds a wise man who having conquered all passions, feels happiness and emotion, but in the midst of torture. Plato advocates the man of meditation and likens his powers to those of the divinity; and we see the Christian ascetics themselves through a mere life of contemplation and self-torture acquire powers of levitation or æthrobacy, which, though attributed to the miraculous intervention of a personal God, are nevertheless real and the result of physiological changes in the human body.

"The Yogi," says Patanjali, "will hear celestial sounds, the songs and conversations of celestial choirs. He will have the perception of their touch in their passage through the air,"—which translated into a more sober language means that the ascetic is enabled to see with the spiritual eye in the Astral Light, hear with the spiritual ear subjective sounds inaudible to others, and live and feel, so to say, in the *Unseen Universe*. "The Yogi is able to enter a dead or a living body by the path of the senses, and in this body to act as though it were his own." The "path of the senses": our physical senses [are] supposed to originate in the astral body, the ethereal counterpart of man, or in the *jiv-atma* [individual life-principle], which dies with the body, but the senses are here meant in their spiritual sense—volition of the higher principle in man. The true Raj Yogi is a Stoic; and Kapila, who deals but with the latter—utterly rejecting the claim of the *Hatha* Yogis to converse during Samadhi with the *Infinite* Iswar—describes their state in the following words:—"To a Yogi, in whose mind all things are identified as spirit, what is infatuation? what is grief? He sees all

things as one; he is destitute of affections; he neither rejoices in good, nor is offended with evil. . . . A wise man sees so many false things in those which are called true, so much misery in what is called happiness, that he turns away with disgust. . . . He who in the body has obtained liberation (from the tyranny of the senses) is of no caste, of no sect, of no order, attends to no duties, adheres to no shastras, to no formulas, to no works of merit; he is beyond the reach of speech; he remains at a distance from all secular concerns; he has renounced the love and the knowledge of sensible objects; he flatters none, he honours none, he is not worshipped, he worships none; whether he practises and follows the customs of his fellowmen or not, this is his character."

And a selfish and a disgustingly misanthropical one this character would be, were it that for which the TRUE ADEPT would be striving. But it must not be understood *literally*. (January, 1881)

[*Dr. Paul's article concludes with reference to the "Ashta Siddhis," or eight consummations. The paragraphs commented upon by the Editor are here given in quotation marks, followed by the editorial notes.*]

"6. *Prakamya.*—By Prakamya is meant the power of casting the old skin and maintaining a youth-like appearance for an unusual period of time. By some writers it is defined to be the property of entering into the system of another."

Perhaps the Hobilgans and the Shaberons of Tibet might have something to tell us if they chose. The great secret which enwraps the mystery of the reincarnations of their great Dalay-Lamas, their Supreme Hobilgans, and others who as well as the former are supposed, a few days after their Enlightened Souls have laid aside their mortal clothing, to reincarnate themselves in young and always previously to that very weak bodies of children, has never yet been told. These children who are invariably on the point of death when designated to have their bodies become the tabernacles of the Souls of deceased Buddhas, recover immediately after the ceremony, and barring accident, live long years, exhibiting trait for trait the same peculiarities of temper, characteristics and predilections as the dead man's. But of this no more for the present.

"8. *I's'atwa, or Divine Power.*—When the passions are restrained from their desires, the mind becomes tranquil and the soul is awakened. The Yogi becomes full of Brahma (the Supreme Soul) *(a)*. His eye penetrates all the secrets of nature, he knows the events of the past, present, and future; and, when he is not led astray by the temptations of the seven preceding 'perfections,' his soul not only holds communion with the invisible, inconceivable, unalterable, omni-present, omniscient, and omnipotent Principle, but he becomes absorbed into the essence of the same. It is commonly supposed that a Yogi who acquires this power, can restore the dead to life *(b)*."

(a) In which case it means that the Soul being liberated from the yoke of the body through certain practices, discipline and purity of life, during the life-time of the latter, acquires powers identical with its primitive element, the universal Soul. It has overpowered its material custodian; the terrestrial gross appetites and passions of the latter, from being its despotic masters have become its Slaves, hence the Soul has become free henceforth to exercise its transcendental powers untrammelled by any fetters.

(b) Life once extinct can never be recalled. But *another* life and *another* Soul can sometimes reanimate in the abandoned frame, if we may believe learned men who were never known to utter an untruth.

Wherever the word 'Soul' has occurred in the course of the above comments, the reader must bear in mind that we do not use it in the sense of an immortal principle in man, but in that of the group of personal qualities which are but a congeries of material particles whose term of survival is limited, this survival of the physical, or material, personality being for a longer or shorter period, proportionately with the grossness or refinement of the individual.

Various correspondents have asked whether the Siddhis of Yoga can only be acquired by the rude training of Hatha Yoga. . . . But the fact is that there is another, an unobjectionable and rational process, the particulars of which cannot be given to the idle inquirer, and which must not even be touched upon at the latter end of a commentary like the present one. The subject may be reverted to at a more favorable time. (April, 1881)

RESPONSIBILITY OF INDIVIDUALS

THERE is a tendency in our age to measure progress in terms of material achievement—to regard civilization solely from the point of view of radios, bath tubs, jet planes, and the like. We place little value upon the inner moral acquirements of patience, justice, charity, truth. We look with disdain upon the simpler peoples of olden times, and belittle their claims to states of society deserving the title of "golden age." But a distinct change is dawning upon the spirit of our age, and we are beginning to question the correctness of our views. We are probing the meaning of the term *civilization.* We are looking for clues that will throw light upon what seems to be an inevitable recurrence of the rises and falls of nations. We are searching for means to avert the errors of the past. But where are such clues, such immanent ways and means, to be found? Where are we to look for a philosophy that will not only enable us to avert past errors, but to build more stably in the future? Where else except in the ideas and principles handed down from time immemorial by all the world's great Sages?

The civilized society, in the view of Theosophy, is one that is built entirely upon the sovereignty and integrity of the individual. It is a community of souls in which breathes the spirit of individual freedom, the latter depending for its continuance upon the fulfillment of individual responsibility. The civilized state, it holds, is ever related to the individual. For what is civilization (from the Latin *civis,* citizen) but an enlightened order of society in which the determining factor is *the citizen,* and not ecclesiastical, state, or military groups?

The ideologies of today, however, are based upon entirely different theories. They subordinate the individual to the machine. They relegate him to the position of mere cog within a wheel. Modern philosophy considers the individual to be important only to the extent that he serves the interests of government, army, labor union or church. These latter no longer exist for the original purpose of serving the citizen and of protecting his sovereignty, but he for the purpose of serving them. The inalienable power of choice no longer rests with the individual, but with the organization. And any recalcitrant who dares to follow his own conscience

or choose a course of action opposed to the "good judgment" of the authorities is immediately excommunicated by church or society, or thrown into prison by the state.

Growing logically out of this credo is the idea that true citizenship is exemplified in the man who, in all things, conforms to the dicta of the authorities, who concurs placidly in all opinions put forth by those in power. Supporters of this view usually take the position that "I'll do what my country does, be it right or wrong," thus placing the whims and opinions of temporary parties higher than the principles of truth and justice instituted from all eternity. But how can this be called patriotism? How can a nation violate the laws of eternal justice and survive? Ideal citizenship, in the view of Theosophy, is oftentimes found in the man who dares to stand alone, who sees a better way and takes it, ready and willing to pay the price of his conviction. How is the nation to be guided along a proper course except there be a few who have educated themselves in citizenry, and have the courage to stand for right principles?

It is the sins of omission on the part of individuals that make the crimes of their brothers possible, and that lead to bondage in the course of time.

Dictatorships cannot exist among people who have minds of their own, who dare to think and act for themselves. Nor can ecclesiastical serfdom prevail except there be a field of ignorance, fear, and blind belief. But so surely as men fall below *par* in intellectual or moral stamina, so surely will some ambitious leader —religious, political, or otherwise—seize the opportunity to exploit their weakness.

Study of history from this point of view will reveal an amazing parallel between the rises and falls of nations and the ebb and flow of man's own assumption of individual responsibility. It will depict in tragic colors the increasing faint-heartedness of the men of ancient Rome, which laid her open to a form of state domination seldom equalled, and which finally led to ruin. It will show the debility of the medieval mind, making possible the abuses of the early Church. The moment the power of the initiatory slips out of the hand of the individual into that of vested interests—from that moment begins a dark cycle in the history of mind.

Individual responsibility means acting from within, the doing of every deed on the basis of right, irrespective of what others may say or demand. This does not mean that one should close his mind to reason or debate, but simply that he refuse to be governed by emotional or mass appeal, or to be aroused to inconsiderate action through the incitement of others. The true citizen ever works for the elevation of his nation spiritually, morally, intellectually, and physically. But he realizes that the greatest contribution any man can make to the community is to *be* himself what he would have the community be. Knowing himself to be an inseparable part of the whole, and that what affects one affects all, he undertakes the task of strengthening *in himself* the noble qualities of his nation, and of killing out defects.

Nothing lofty or of permanent value is ever accomplished by use of external force. The power of the self-governed individual is that of precept and example, whereby others are inspired to similar action. It is the awakening from within of the desire to do better. And herein lies the crux of all true progress; men must be inspired *to want to do better,* otherwise no amount of trying to force them will avail. The mere presence in the community of a rightly motivated man or woman, who is self-governed, can produce a more lasting change for good than a whole army of men working to reform people by means of legislation.

The old Chinese adage places all hope for a better world in the hearts and minds of individual citizens: If the members of a family are self-governed, then the family will be self-governed; if the families of a community are self-governed, then the community will be self-governed; if the communities of a state are self-governed, then the state will be self-governed; if the states of the world are self-governed, then the world will be self-governed. All progress in civilization must begin with individuals.

The sum total of the common sense of the common people is the greatest and soundest force on earth. —THOMAS JEFFERSON

ON THE LOOKOUT

Art Magic

Some modern art may strike the untutored eye as quite definitely "out of focus," but it would hardly seem justified to say, with T. H. Robsjohn-Gibbings, (*American Weekly,* Feb. 22), that this genre is the modern vehicle of Black Magic:

> The antique hunter of the future will be at some pains to explain to his friends what the art signifies, as do the collectors of today. Just why art should have to be explained is something of a mystery. Perhaps the truth of the matter was best stated by one of London's most famous art critics, in analyzing the pictures of Picasso.
>
> He described them as "black magic, no more no less," adding that "black magic is also the cult of personal power and fame goes with it." The critic was close to the mark however startling it may sound.

We are taken back to the witch doctors of Africa and the Pacific for the derivation, according to Mr. R-G., of modern art.

> The witch doctors used very simple methods to create a belief in their magic powers. Their first problem was to rivet the attention of their audience, and they knew that nothing holds attention so much as a familiar object in wild distortion. Accordingly, they took something as ordinary as a man's face and by carefully guarded formulas turned it into a monstrosity of a mask. . . .
>
> A group of German artists were the first to make use of these magic tricks as long ago as the turn of the century. The artists took an everyday scene in German life—a fishing boat, a street, or a man's face—and by distorting them almost beyond recognition and depicting them in incongruous and shocking colors, they stopped the gallery-goer dead in his track. While the spectator stood confused and hypnotized at seeing his familiar world so dislocated, he was told that what he saw was the result of a new supernatural vision of "genius," a vision unattainable by lesser mortals. It was the identical process used by the witch doctors.

"Occultism, Fascism, etc."

Since the black arts seem to have lost their more terrifying aspects in the genial confusion which overtakes most moderns when they stray too close to anything mystical or even vaguely philosophical, it is not altogether surprising that Occultism and Black

Magic, Fascism and Modern Art are amicably associated in Mr. R-G's view. "Until recently," he says, "the secret of modern art and its connection with occultism and Fascism has been well kept."

Not content with his pseudo-plausible generalizations, Mr. R-G has pursued his enquiry persistently, if not avidly. With an animus against modern, "non-objective" art, a few reference works of varying quality, a slight talent for malice, and measureless irresponsibility, he recently put together a book called *Mona Lisa's Mustache.* (This was issued in 1947 by Knopf, publisher of *Priestess of the Occult*—another experiment in fictitiousness.) One need not be a lover of modern art to discover Mr. R-G a careless writer, who, as one reviewer put it, has "more words than information."

"Chain of Evidence"

Without spending too much space on his unhappy effort, it is necessary to point out that, so far as Theosophy and Madame Blavatsky are concerned, his ignorance is even greater than his carelessness. Briefly, R-G traces non-objective painting to the influence of "Theosophy" through the astral "thought-forms" of Annie Besant and Charles Leadbeater. A Russian painter, Kandinsky, the author finds, admired Madame Blavatsky, and from Kandinsky's work is traced a long train of abstract consequences which, apparently, are made the excuse for a full-page photograph of H.P.B. There is also extensive discussion of what Gertrude Marvin Williams, author of *Priestess of the Occult* (see Theosophy xxxv, 92 and 125) presents as Madame Blavatsky's life and work.

R-G cites Kandinsky's book, *The Art of Spiritual Harmony,* suggesting that the painter learned from Madame Blavatsky's *Key to Theosophy* about the value of hypnotism as a means of artistic inspiration! Thus, by implication, Madame Blavatsky is charged with responsibility for teaching the painters of non-objective art to work in hypnotic trance to get effects that are new and different. Actually, in the *Key,* she calls hypnotism a "terrible power" and shows it to be the source of crime and psychic degradation. It is more than ironic to consider that if the author of *Mona Lisa's Mustache* had done firsthand research in *what Theosophy teaches,* his criticism of "modern art" might have been even more stringent, in consideration of the dangerous passivity so often invoked by the artist.

SYMBOLISM AND SELF

Not a few fashionable proponents of "modern art" are known to affirm that their productions chiefly represent a subjective self-communication, and obviously the more recent forms of painting and sculpture seek to provoke ideas and insights by a special use of symbols. Artists have tended to replace the classic or universal symbols drawn from the natural world and objective realities, with symbols from the "sub-conscious," the subjective world of personal perceptions. Yet the promise of sober manasic evaluation is lost in a threat when, as often happens, symbols and symmetry alike are forced to retreat before the insistent distortions improvised by artists engrossed in the spectacle of self.

It is by no means a new observation—though it remains a consistently useful one—that the art of a civilization prefigures its impending state. This must seem most natural to theosophists aware of the psychic pre-requisites of artistry—whether literary, pictorial or musical—for particularly in Kali-Yuga is the psychic nature the determining characteristic of a race or nation. Indeed, the most common form of "inspiration" may not be significantly different from the visions described by H.P.B. as "the unnatural distortions of sights and images tossed on the kaleidoscopic waves of the astral plane."

"OUT OF FOCUS"

The argument presented in H. P. Blavatsky's article, "Are Chelas Mediums?" (THEOSOPHY XXXV, 388), is that all men are the vehicles for inspiration from one or another source. But spiritualistic mediums and the more "psychic" artists may be comparable in a special sense, according to the definition given by H.P.B. in "Psychic and Noetic Action":

> A medium is simply one in whose personal Ego, or terrestrial mind, (psuche), the percentage of "astral" light so preponderates as to impregnate with it their whole physical constitution. Every organ and cell thereby is attuned, so to speak, and subjected to an enormous and abnormal tension. The mind is ever on the plane of, and quite immersed in, that deceptive light whose *soul* is divine, but whose body—the light waves on the lower planes, infernal; for they are but the black and disfigured reflections of the earth's memories. The untrained eye of the poor sensitive cannot pierce

> the dark mist, the dense fog of the terrestrial emanations, to see beyond in the radiant field of the eternal truths. His vision is out of focus.

Unstable Outposts

Faced with the alternatives of assigning mediumship or black magic to our modern artists, in all fairness we must choose the former. Artists, even in the highest civilization, are distinguished from the mass of their fellows by an extraordinary sensitiveness—a quality which, subjected to the exaggerations provoked by our culture, can easily manifest in acute forms of unbalance and confusion. "Modern" artists are the involuntary vanguards in the present course of our society. Peculiarly susceptible, they may be considered as the first victims of the concurrence of several psychic cycles, but hardly as the instigators of them. They possess, paradoxically, *too clear a sight* into the inconstancies and inconsistencies of human nature and, as H. P. Blavatsky put it, too short a vision to "see beyond in the radiant field of the eternal truths." Only a hypercritical judge could condemn a man for seeing in a "distorted" manner where so many social and psychic distortions actually exist.

"The Unwritten Classics"

Another volume, probably on a par with *Mona Lisa's Mustache,* is a book on magic, witchcraft and occultism, by L. Sprague de Camp, a portion of which appeared in the *Saturday Review of Literature* for March 29, 1947. The section reprinted is entitled "The Unwritten Classics," and is intended as an exposé of famous and legendary books often quoted but never seen. Mr. de Camp, we are told, achieved his reputation as author of a patent textbook, three novels, forty-odd magazine stories and articles popularizing science. Whatever may have been his technique of exposition in those fields, in his investigation of this phase of literature he seems to consider that a would-be-engaging flippancy will absolve him from the responsibilities of an intelligent sceptic. Ridicule is his favorite tool, unbelief his end—and his readers are left as confused as to what is fact and what is fiction in his article as were the gullible thrill-seekers he tells about, who raided bookstores all over the world in search of the fabled but ever unmaterialized "Necronomicon."

FRAGMENTS OR FIGMENTS?

Our author's grasp of the unwritten classics is indeed a capacious one, stretching without effort to include the "Book of Thoth" in one hand and the Lovecraft-Sax Rohmer "editions" in the other.

> Between the wholly real and the wholly unreal books lies a shadow-land of books that are, yet are not: unfinished books, lost books, apocrypha, and pseudepigraphy (falsely attributed books). Most recondite of all are books that were never written, but which exist solely as a title, with perhaps excerpts, in a work of fiction or pseudo-fact.

With a fine sense of religious propriety, Mr. de Camp passes over the "Holy Bible" in his fragmentary listing of literary fakes. The Bible, of course, is *written,* and therefore technically out of his field, but written when, how, and by whom? Are the tablets of stone allegedly delivered to Moses any the less legendary than, for instance, the Smaragdine Tablet of Hermes of which Mr. de Camp makes so light?

"NON-EXISTENT INFLUENCE"

The *Saturday Review* article is of interest to theosophists because of the "prominent" part played by H. P. Blavatsky in de Camp's discussion. While he treats her with considerably more respect—which means, for him, silence—than he does the other victims of his survey, he gives no credence to the "Stanzas of Dzyan":

> Perhaps the most influential unwritten classic of modern times was Mme. Blavatsky's "Book of Dzyan." We are told that "dzyan" (pronounced "John") means "self-reform by meditation and knowledge." This book purported to be an ancient work of occult wisdom, apparently in Tibetan, which Mme. Blavatsky's Mahatmas showed her in trances.

It would seem that revelators of unwritten classics should be the first to wonder how a non-existent book can be an "influence" on anything, and what has made the Book of Dzyan the "most influential unwritten classic of modern times," and what distinguishes it and the Book of Thoth alike from the hundreds and thousands of "occult treatises" invented by pulp authors to infuse a vicarious thrill of mysticism into their sterile productions.

Still Room for Scholars

Were the casual sceptic to read carefully the Introductory to the *Secret Doctrine,* he might be a trifle more cautious in derogation, for H.P.B. there replied to as yet "unwritten" criticisms of her sources. Mr. de Camp's unscholarly and unscientific "exposé" deserves, in itself, little or no discussion, and his criticism is put much more strongly by H.P.B. herself. Certain of her statements merit special consideration. In the Preface to the first volume of the *S.D.,* she says, "It is more than probable that the book will be regarded by a large section of the public as a romance of the wildest kind; for who has ever even heard of the book of Dzyan?"

Mme. Blavatsky, however, does not rest her case on one mysterious volume. She states (I, xxiii): "The main body of the Doctrines given is found scattered throughout hundreds and thousands of Sanskrit MSS. . . . Every scholar, therefore, has an opportunity of verifying the statements herein made, and of checking most of the quotations."

Where Lies Authority?

The central issue is that of authority: What validity does the act of writing itself give to ideas? It is regrettable and also puzzling that there are men of science who insist on their freedom from authority, yet seem forever unable to search an idea for its inherent truth, regardless of its source. H.P.B. presents us with a key to this problem:

> The *"invention of magic!"* A strange term to use, as though the unveiling of the eternal and actual mysteries of nature could be *invented!* . . . Hermes was not the inventor, or even the discoverer, for . . . Thot-Hermes is a generic name as is Enoch (enoichion, the "inner, spiritual eye"), *Nebo,* the prophet and seer, etc. It is not the proper name of any one living man, but a generic title of many adepts. . . . They are all the representative patrons of the Secret Wisdom. (*S.D.,* II, 211.)

One other statement in the *Secret Doctrine* (II, 530-1) is germane to the present discussion. H. P. Blavatsky challenges the methods used by the Church to determine which books of the Bible are "apocryphal"—much the same task undertaken in a private capacity and in a different context by pseudo-scholars.

"PRIMITIVE RECORDS"

How many of the "unwritten classics" might have been withdrawn beyond the reach of the "profane" is something which students may speculate on, aided by some very significant statements in the Introductory to the *Secret Doctrine:*

> The Secret Doctrine teaches us that the arts, sciences, theology, and especially the philosophy of every nation which preceded the last *universally known,* but not universal Deluge, has been recorded ideographically from the primitive oral records of the Fourth Race, and that these were the inheritance of the latter from the early Third Root-Race before the allegorical Fall. Hence, also, the Egyptian pillars, the tablets, and even the "white Oriental porphyry stone" of the Masonic legend—which Enoch, fearing that the real and precious secrets would be lost, concealed before the Deluge in the bowels of the Earth—were simply the more or less symbolical and allegorical copies from the primitive Records.

It would seem a providential foresight (though in reality it is but an operation of the law of affinity) that the real classics, whether written or unwritten, are ever undisclosed to those who seek with eyes so open for forgery and falsehood that their minds are securely closed and locked against truth.

THE RECORD OF THE DEEP

The voyage of the *Challenger,* which sailed from an English port in 1872, really laid the foundations of the modern systematic science of oceanography. A Swedish expedition has now set out for the purpose of further scientific research on the ocean floors. Prof. Hans Pettersson, the leader of the party, writing in the London *Times* (Aug. 1, 1947), states that the main object of the voyage is to study deep-sea deposits, and that "the course chosen will carry us across some of the hypothetical land-bridges postulated by palaeontologists and biologists in order to explain past migrations of animals and plants across the oceans. These sunken roads of very ancient times—if they actually existed—may be revealed by successful echo sounding of the sediment thickness." Among many studies to be carried out during the course of fifteen months is one, not of the ocean but of the highest atmospheric layers, concerning the structure of the ionosphere, which is to be investigated by short-

wave radio. The enterprise is a co-operative one in the matter of equipment, for the Hydrographic Office of Washington, the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, and the British Admiralty, have all rendered valuable assistance.

Land and Water

It is a strange fact that land and water areas of the earth are nearly always antipodal, and that man's physical body is mostly "sea-water" and his lungs inhale it at each unconscious respiration. Each human being carries many traces of the watery five-sevenths of the living earth. Man's physical affinities with land, water, and sky are indubitable, and they stretch back over an almost illimitable past. When science brings to her aid metaphysics, she may find also that man bears witness, in some layer of consciousness, to past global changes of tremendous import in the disposition of land and water areas:

> Twice already has the face of the globe been changed by fire, and twice by water, since man appeared on it. As land needs rest and renovation, new forces, and a change for its soil, so does water. Thence arises a periodical redistribution of land and water, change of climates, etc., all brought on by geological revolution, and ending in a final change in the axis. (*S.D.*, II, 726.)

Oceans and Cataclysms

Prof. Hans Pettersson mentions that only the uppermost layers of the oceanic deposits have hitherto been accessible by means of core-samplers penetrating a few feet below the surface. "They give evidence of great climatic, volcanic, and tectonic catastrophes which have overtaken our planet." The occult tradition of the submersion of the continent of Atlantis 850,000 years ago is not likely to impress modern scientists, but it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that oceanographers may yet make their contribution to a joint research into the age of the Aryan race. A hint was given in 1888, in *The Secret Doctrine* (II, 609):

> When geology shall have found out how many thousands of years ago the disturbed waters of the Indian Ocean reached the highest plateaux of Central Asia, when the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf made one with it, then only will they know the age of the Aryan Brahminical nation, and the time of its descent into the plains of Hindostan, which it did millenniums later.

THE OCEAN FLOOR

The Swedish expedition in the "Albatross," which left Göteburg on July 4, 1947, will also undertake biological work by dredging and trawling at great depths in the North Atlantic Ocean, from the Equator northwards. Whatever discoveries may be made as a result of this special work, there is little doubt that conundrums relating to evolutionary processes are bound to arise. The search will still be on, in the special field of oceanic biology as in the wider sphere of natural selection, for the basic factors of differentiation. On that subject, and with special reference to fishes and the amphibia, the findings of occult science have been recorded (*S.D.*, II, 684):

> So far as our present *Fourth Round* terrestrial period is concerned . . . the amphibia, birds, reptiles, fishes, etc., are the resultants of the Third Round, astral fossil forms stored up in the auric envelope of the Earth and projected into physical objectivity subsequent to the deposition of the first Laurentian rocks. "Evolution" has to deal with the progressive modifications, which palaeontology shows to have affected the lower animal and vegetable kingdoms in the course of geological time. It does not, and from the nature of things cannot, touch on the subject of the prephysical types which served as the basis for future differentiation.

MAYA CIVILIZATION

As is the case with all lost civilizations, modern knowledge of the ancient Maya of Central America is dependent on four main sources: the evidence of archaeology; surviving manuscripts; accounts written by travellers, past and present; and the way of life preserved by descendants of the old population. While new discoveries continue, yet it is true to say that whole cities lie as yet unexplored:

> Of the seven known sites in the area of the Pasion River not one has yet been excavated. Two-thirds of the Maya hieroglyphs remain undeciphered, and we know as little of the history of the Maya Old Empire as we do of the Minoan. (*Times Literary Supplement*, London, Oct. 25, 1947.)

These recognized gaps in our knowledge, however, do not lead Dr. Sylvanus G. Morley to suppose other than that the Maya chronological system was devised in about the third or fourth century before Christ—about 3,000 years after its starting point or zero date. Dr. Morley has devoted himself to this subject for forty

years. Among his best known achievements are the discovery of Uaxactun and the excavation of Chichen Itza. The fruits of a lifetime's work are recorded in his volume, *The Ancient Maya* (1947).

Origin and Decline of the Mayas

The *Times* review of Dr. Morley's work mentions the author's concern to emphasize the "cultural scratch" from which the Maya began, and his conclusion that "starting from the same cultural scratch, no Neolithic people of the Old World ever reached such heights of cultural achievement . . . we may safely acclaim the ancient Maya as the most brilliant aboriginal people on this planet." Here, again, is the obsession of scholarship with the argument from origins along the conventional lines of the Darwinian hypothesis as applied to anthropological and sociological research. In this view, just as ethics are assumed to arise from a non-ethical origin, so civilization has developed by trial and error, or catastrophically, from primeval or aboriginal beginnings. No real account is taken of periodicity as necessary to the completion of any true evolutionary theory. On the origin of Western civilization, one of H. P. Blavatsky's Eastern teachers raised the question:

> What do you know of America, for instance, before the invasion of that country by the Spaniards?
>
> Less than two centuries prior to the arrival of Cortez there was as great a "rush" towards progress among the *sub-races* of Peru and Mexico as there is now [1882] in Europe and the U.S.A. Their sub-race ended in nearly total annihilation through causes generated by itself; so will yours at the end of its cycle.

In fact, the cause of the decline and fall of the Old Maya Empire is not the mystery which so puzzles the archaeologist. The gradual exhaustion of the land, the introduction of human sacrifice, and other economic and political phenomena, all have their part to play in the dissolution. But they are symptoms only: "Nemesis is without attributes . . . it is we ourselves—nations and individuals —who propel her to action and give the impulse to its direction."

Religion of the Mayas

Explorers enter upon pure supposition when they refer to a Maya renaissance in Yucatan in the eleventh and twelfth centuries as deriving from a tenth-century infiltration from the west under the

leadership of Kukulkan, so closely identified with Quetzalcoatl, the Plumed Serpent God of the Toltecs (*Times Lit. Supp.*, Oct. 25, 1947). The fact that this High God is not to be found on the earlier monuments in human form is evidence that only later superstition and oblivion of the primitive meaning, euhemerized "the Dragon of Wisdom" into a tribal deity. A study of Dr. Paul Schellhas' pamphlet, translated for Harvard University under the title "Representation of Deities of the Maya Manuscripts" (published as No. 1 of Vol. IV of the Papers of the Peabody Museum, Cambridge, Mass.: 1904), whose lettering convention for Mayan myth was adopted by archaeologists the world over, will itself confirm the truth of H. P. Blavatsky's statement that the Mayas were certainly coeval with Plato's Atlantis (some 11,500 years ago), even though they "belonged to the Fifth Continent, which was preceded by Atlantis and Lemuria" (*S.D.*, II, 35 fn.).

NOTE ON LIFE SCIENCES

The New York *Herald Tribune* for Feb. 3 announced the demonstration by the American Optical Company of a new microscope which makes it possible to watch the action of transparent living cells.

> Called a "phase microscope," the instrument takes advantage of the fact that matter which does not reflect light nevertheless alters the course of the light in passing through it. . . . Previously, bacteriologists have depended on stains to make such cells visible and, although these stains reflected light properly, they also killed the samples that were under study.

Scientists have long sought a way to observe the processes of living cells without injuring them or impairing their normal activity. Sir Chundra Bose, some twenty-five years ago, devised an "electric probe" to record the impulses and vibrations in a living plant without damaging its tissues. The development of the phase microscope, by opening up new possibilities of harmless experimentation, may help to replace vivisection as a laboratory technique, and the "life sciences" may then be pursued in a manner more befitting their name.

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